DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 316 730 CE 054 400

AUTHOR	de Vries, B.
TITLE	Educational and Vocational Guidance for the Long-Term Unemployed in the Netherlands.
INSTITUTION	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, Berlin (West Germany).
REPORT NO	ISBN-92-826-0784-4
PUB DATE	Jan 89
NOTE	93p.
AVAILABLE FROM	UNIPUB, 4661-F Assembly Drive, Lanham, MD 20706-4391 (Catalogue No. HX-56-89-805-EN, $6.00).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Access to Education; *Career Guidance; *Educational Counseling; Educational Trends; *Employment Services; Followup Studies; Foreign Countries; *Job Layoff; *Policy Formation; Program Evaluation; *Unemployment
IDENTIFIERS	*Netherlands

ABSTRACT

This document on educational and vocational guidance in the Netherlands includes 7 chapters, a summary, a list of addresses, and a 22-item bibliography. Chapter 1 introduces the report and describes its contents. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the institutions (local employment offices, private guidance bureaus, Regional Boards for the Apprenticeship System, Women and Work Centers, and Area Education Centers) concerned with educational and vocational guidance in the Netherlands. Chapter 3 outlines the services provided for the long-term unemployed. Chapter 4 describes the policy developments underway in the field. Four projects that include guidance services for the long-term unemployed are described in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 provides a comparison of the projects. Six recommendations for the future are provided in Chapter 7. The recommendations include viewing educational and vocational guidance for the long-term unemployed as an integrated process; close cooperation among relevant organizations; minimizing barriers to access; making concrete job offers available; offering follow-up services; and continuing to compare and evaluate projects. (CML)

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Educational and vocational guidance for the long-term unemployed in the Netherlands

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

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Educational and vocational guidance for the long-term unemployed in the Netherlands

B. de Vries

ITS, Institute of Applied Social Sciences
January 1989

First edition, Berlin 1989

Published by:

CEDEFOP — European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training,
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Bundesallee 22, **D-1000 Berlin 15**
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Telefax (0 30) 88 41 22 22

The Centre was established by Regulation (EEC) No 337/75 of the Council of the European Communities

Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication.

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1989

ISBN 92-826-0784-4

Catalogue number: HX-56-89-805-EN-C

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Printed in Belgium

Foreword

Despite a wide variety of efforts by the Governments of the Member States, in some parts of the Community unemployment has increased in the recent past as well. Furthermore, the structure of unemployment has changed:

- It is now less common for young people to represent the focus of unemployment.
- There has been a continued increase in the duration of unemployment: approximately one half of today's unemployed have already been out of work for more than one year - and often for more than two years.
- The regional differences in the unemployment rate have increased continuously.

Irrespective of their very different initial situations, those affected by long-term unemployment are confronted not only with major economic difficulties, but also with enormous psychological and social problems. If such individuals are not integrated into the workforce quickly, considerable burdens also result for the Governments of the Member States - because, the longer such workers remain outside the labour market, the more limited their opportunites for reintegration become, and the burden on public-sector social budgets increases correspondingly.

Vocational guidance and counselling do not create employment, but they do play a crucial role in the integration process. They can help the individual take stock of occupa-

tional and personal experience and assess possibilities for utilizing this experience in a qualification measure or applying it directly in an occupation. Through such guidance and counselling, the unemployed individual can acquire the social skills needed to look for work self-confidently and on the basis of personal initiative. Vocational guidance and counselling can provide those responsible for training with important information to help design their qualification measures, and such guidance and counselling can help employers find niches where workers threatened by social and vocational marginalization can be used in a way that benefits both sides. Last but not least, vocational guidance and counselling help governments provide for optimal utilization of human labour within the framework of the respective political objectives.

The strategies of the individual Member States are very different, as can be seen in the eight country studies presented by CEDEFOP (F, D, UK, I, P, E, NL, DA). A synthesis report that has been commissioned will provide more detailed information on this subject.

However, the studies can and should serve as a basis for a joint exchange of experience, for the formulation of proposals for improvement and, last but not least, for making the different guidance and counselling provisions accessible across national borders in the light of the European internal market.

A balance between different parts of the Community was sought when certain Member States were chosen for the country studies. However, this does not mean that important innovations are lacking in other Member States. The latter should be included in our planning and proposals for possible measures by the EC and/or the Member States.

This CEDEFOP project supplements the work of the Commission on vocational guidance and counselling, which has concentrated on young people thus far.

All eight country reports are being published in the original language, as well as in German, English, and French.

In 1989/1990 CEDEFOP will examine a number of innovative projects in the Member States concerned with the continuing training and retraining of the long-term unemployed.

Dr. Corrado Politi
Deputy Director

Gesa Chomé
Project Coordinator

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1. INTRODUCTION

The long-term unemployed account for a growing proportion of the total number out of work: where in 1980 only 25% of those without jobs in the countries of the European Community had been unemployed for a long period (Chomé, 1987), by 1987 the figure had risen to 50%, of whom a third had been jobless for two years or more.

In 1988 54% of those registered as seeking work in the Netherlands had been unemployed for over a year, giving a total for the long-term unemployed of 350 000.

The measures which EC member states have taken to reduce these numbers have included both job-creation schemes and ongoing programmes of training and retraining (Annex I, 1988). The need has emerged in this connection for effective information and counselling services for the purpose of identifying individuals' requirements and aptitudes and referring them to appropriate training. Most member states, however, do not make systematic provision for such services.

CEDEFOP has therefore sought to chart the situation in member states and to identify a number of projects for further study with a view to their serving as models for emulation, and in this connection has asked the Institute of Applied Social Sciences (ITS) in Nijmegen to compile a report on the current position in the Netherlands as regards educational and vocational guidance for the long-term unemployed, together with an overview of relevant

projects.

The report is made up as follows. Chapter 2 gives an overview of the institutional structure, i.e. of the bodies concerned with educational and vocational guidance, and Chapter 3 then outlines the services they provide for the long-term unemployed. Chapter 4 looks at the many developments currently taking place in this field, which will lead eventually to radical changes in the situation outlined in Chapter 2. Projects which include guidance services for the long-term unemployed, mentioned briefly in Chapter 2, are considered in greater detail in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 compares the projects one with another, and Chapter 7 sets out our recommendations.

We also include a summary, a list of relevant addresses and a bibliography.

2. EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE IN THE NETHERLANDS

2.1. Introduction

This chapter looks at the organizations concerned with educational and vocational guidance in the Netherlands, focusing first on the institutional structure and then on the substantive division of functions. The entire field of educational and vocational guidance is considered, covering all age and other target groups, though with a special emphasis on facilities for adults.

In the Netherlands it is customary to use the Dutch term which translates as "educational and vocational guidance"; "vocational guidance" is used sometimes to designate services concerned only with job and career choices and sometimes as a general term for the whole field. While there is little distinction of substance between educational and vocational guidance, administratively the division is a sharp one: the former is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science and the latter of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. We return to this matter at a later stage.

The term "guidance" is used to refer to a wide range of activities as outlined in section 2.3.

It should be borne in mind that this chapter is concerned with the situation as it now exists and that many changes are currently underway. This greatly complicates the task of description, since many aspects of the future

position are still unknown. Some of the likely changes are briefly indicated in this chapter; they are considered at greater length in Chapter 4.

2.2. The institutional structure

A distinction is generally made between public (statutory) and private (voluntary) guidance facilities. Within the two categories services are provided by the following organizations:

- public: 1. Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, through the Local Employment Offices,
- private: 2. private educational and vocational guidance bureaus,
- 3. Regional Boards for the Apprenticeship System,
- 4. Women and Work Centres,
- 5. Area Education Centres.

The public guidance services are a statutory responsibility of the employment ministry and its local offices and are fully funded by the state; the private services are provided by non-governmental organizations but, within a regulatory framework and subject to certain conditions, receive state funding.

Pupils and students in schools, colleges and universities receive educational and vocational guidance from careers staff attached to their educational institution. This service is referred to as internal guidance, to distinguish it from the external guidance services mentioned above.

Other organizations active in this field are the provincial Contact Centres for Education and Employment (COAs), which have the job of coordinating guidance activities in their areas; on occasion they may themselves also provide or arrange guidance (De Vries, 1985).

In what follows we look at the external guidance organizations.

2.2.1 Local Employment Offices

Local Employment Offices (GABs) form part of the employment-services organization of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, which comprises twelve provincial offices and 65 local offices. Currently a section of the Ministry, the entire apparatus is shortly to be hived off from the civil service and placed under a quasi-autonomous Central Employment Services Executive (CBA), which will include representatives of the two sides of industry and the government (see below).

The Local Employment Offices' statutory functions include educational and vocational guidance, geared mainly to the employment or reemployment of those seeking work, whether directly or following training. This function, which is aimed solely at adults, is normally performed by trained professionals known as vocational-guidance counsellors.

In recent years the capacity of the public vocational-guidance service has declined by 30% (Raad, 1988), mainly

through increasing pressure on the Employment Offices' primary function of job-finding at a time when they have been given greater autonomy in the use of resources.

One effect of decentralization policies has been a lack of quantitative data at central level on Employment Offices' guidance activities. The Chamber of Audit puts spending on this function in 1985 at some 13 million guilders, which is probably an underestimate (Raad, 1988).

Educational and vocational guidance is a relatively minor part of Local Employment Offices' work and is, moreover, an instrument of manpower policy, i.e. it is primarily geared to helping the registered jobless to obtain employment. At some Offices the introduction of Fresh Start Interviews for the long-term unemployed (see Chapters 3 and 5) has led to the re-expansion of guidance activities.

2.2.2. Private guidance services

As at 1 March 1988 there were 25 educational and vocational guidance bureaus in the private (voluntary) sector with a total of 67 offices (De Vries, 1988). Most of the bureaus (17) had branch offices, and twelve had offices outside their own areas.

These bureaus offer careers information and advice to both youngsters and adults, and to that end employ vocational guidance counsellors and psychologists. Until 1986 they received government grants on the basis of their size, but

since the beginning of January 1987 a new scheme has been in operation under which grants are allocated on the basis of the bureaus' "output". Four categories of output-related grant are distinguished:

1. activity grants, in respect of guidance given to individual clients aged 16 and over not referred by an educational institution;
2. contract grants (type I), in respect of guidance given to pupils and students on the basis of contracts with educational institutions;
3. contract grants (type II), in respect of guidance given to individual clients in the context of Local Employment Offices' placement activities, on the basis of contracts with the Offices;
4. project grants, in respect of guidance given in the framework of a project or experiment carried out in collaboration with educational institutions or Employment Offices.

(Rijkssubsidieregeling 1986; Meiners, 1987.)

Vocational guidance for adults, including the long-term unemployed, is funded through categories 3 and 4.

Annual grants under the 1986 scheme total over 25 million guilders, of which two fifths are provided by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and three fifths by the Ministry of Education and Science.

The target groups are diverse, including many clients who contact the bureaus on their own initiative. There are

plans to make this service more accessible to people with little education, the long-term unemployed, women reentering the labour market and members of ethnic and cultural minorities.

Each institution has an information centre or databank.

The vocational-guidance bureaus are grouped into two umbrella organizations, the Netherlands Vocational Guidance Association (NVB) and the Association of Vocational Guidance Institutes (VBI).

2.3.3. Regional Boards for the Apprenticeship System
In addition to the National Boards (one for each category of training) established under the Apprenticeships Act there are also 15 Regional Boards, whose main tasks are to offer guidance and support to actual and potential students, whether in the apprenticeship system itself, shorter intermediate vocational education (KMBO) or adult education, and to maintain records of training contracts and student flows. To help them carry out their guidance and support function (Verbeet, 1987) the Boards employ around 165 regional counsellors.

The Boards are fully funded by the Ministry of Education, partly on a structural basis (in respect of their statutory duties) and partly on a special-project basis, to a total of 14.6 million guilders per year.
Their target group has traditionally comprised pupils in lower vocational and intermediate general secondary

education (LBO and MAVO), which cater for 12-16-year-olds in the middle and lower parts of the ability range. More recently, however, it has been extended to include pupils in higher general secondary (HAVO) schools (12-17 schools for able youngsters other than the most academic), students in intermediate vocational education (MBO), which caters for youngsters aged 16+, and adults.

The Regional Boards also have a guidance and support function in respect of Elementary Vocationally Orientated Adult Education (PBVE), a form of adult education which falls within the scope of the apprenticeship system. No special provision is made for this purpose, except on a contract basis by a separate PBVE Coordination Unit, so that the extent of such activities is probably not great.

At national level the Central Organization of Regional Boards for the Apprenticeship System (CORO) exists to advance the Regional Boards' interests and to support and represent them in terms of operations and policy.

2.2.4. Women and Work Centres

The forty Women and Work Centres, with a total of 57 separate establishments, have been in operation for some years now. Their main function is to provide guidance and support for women wishing to enter or reenter employment. Funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (Directorate General for Employment Services), through a national grants scheme, to a total of ten million guilders a year, the Centres maintain close

links with Local Employment Offices through joint programmes and referral agreements. In addition the Employment Offices themselves are required to devote a proportion of their budgets (12% in 1988) to activities geared to the needs of women entering or reentering the labour market .

The National Support Unit for Women and Work Centres (LSP) is funded by the Equal Opportunities Directorate of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment.

2.2.5. Area Education Centres

Anticipating new legislation on adult education (see Chapter 3), Area Education Centres (RECs) have been established virtually throughout the country. In addition to their coordinating function and a limited support function in respect of educational staff they have the job of providing information, advice and support for actual and potential participants. The budget for the Area Centres, including national and provincial support, totals 17 million guilders; it is provided by the Ministry of Education and Science.

The Area Centres represent a transitional phase in the movement towards a more integrated regional support structure (see Chapter 4).

2.3. Guidance activities

The various activities constituting educational and vocational guidance can be classified in various ways,

none of which can be regarded as definitive. A broad division might be as follows:

1. the provision of information,
2. counselling in respect of career and job choices,
3. support in resolving specific problems,
4. testing and other diagnostic activities,
5. advice.

In addition to these main tasks the guidance function also includes many specific activities, notably support for counsellors and teachers.

Educational and vocational guidance can be provided on an individual or group basis. Another commonly made distinction is that between primary or general guidance, mainly involving the straightforward provision of information, and secondary or specialist guidance, involving testing, counselling and assistance in resolving problems.

Such substantive distinctions may be reflected in institutional responsibilities. There are differing views on this point. Some see careers staff in schools and colleges as providers of general guidance, with external agencies such as educational and vocational guidance bureaus and the Regional Boards acting as specialist providers; in this view the information and advice which Local Employment Offices provide for the unemployed constitute primary guidance. Others see careers staff and Regional Board counsellors as primary providers, while the vocational-guidance officers and

psychologists working within educational and vocational guidance bureaus and Local Employment Offices provide a specialist service. Finally, there is a view which sees vocational-guidance counsellors, with their broad expertise, as providers of general guidance, while the Regional Boards staff have specialist expertise in respect of the apprenticeship system.

It is widely accepted that Regional Board and Employment Office counsellors have more (and more up-to-date) data on employment opportunities and trends, while the staff of educational and vocational guidance bureaus are more familiar with the processes and problems of job and career choice, the use of diagnostic instruments and individual advice. However, Employment Office counsellors are also able to undertake testing and offer advice.

In considering such distinctions it should be remembered that there is a considerable degree of flexibility in practice and that certain shifts are now taking place, as Regional Board staff offer more individual guidance and educational and vocational guidance counsellors provide a more general "primary" service (De Vries, 1988). Collaborative projects have shown that functions can be transferred from one type of agency to another; indeed, flexibility in the division of functions is a precondition for cooperation between guidance agencies.

3. EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE FOR THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED

3.1. Introduction

Each of the institutions mentioned carries out activities aimed specifically at the long-term unemployed; they are discussed in sections 3.2-6. There are also various local activities for the long-term unemployed, instituted by voluntary bodies and municipal authorities, sometimes in collaboration with Local Employment Offices and Municipal Social Welfare Departments. These are the subject of section 3.7. This chapter provides an overview of all guidance work for and with the long-term unemployed; Chapter 5 looks at a number of projects in greater detail.

Definitions of long-term unemployment vary, the most usual being unemployment which has lasted one year or more; the very-long-term unemployed are those who have been out of work for three years or more.

A separate category comprises people, mainly women, entering or reentering the labour market: while they may have been without paid employment for a long time (perhaps while bringing up children) they may not have been registered as seeking work for more than a short period. However, their frequent lack of qualifications and familiarity with the labour market makes their problems broadly comparable with those of the long-term unemployed.

Some agencies, notably the Local Employment Offices, aim

their activities solely at those who are registered with them; others do not apply this condition.

3.2. Local Employment Offices

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, currently still responsible for the network of Local Employment Offices, regards cutting long-term unemployment as one of its major goals:

"One of the most serious issues with which labour-market policy is faced is the persistence of a hard core of long-term unemployment. Long-term unemployment is a major problem not just in social terms but also, increasingly, in economic terms: the erosion of skills and indeed employability to which it can lead in turn produces labour shortages, rising labour costs and a loss of output. It is thus an issue which must be tackled jointly by employers, unions and government."
(Meerjarenkader, 1989-92, 1988.)

The government has responded to this problem with both preventive and curative policies.

The preventive policy has three components:

a. a system of grants aimed at encouraging firms to take on the long-term unemployed (formerly those out of work for three years, now reduced to two). Because the scheme serves as a general incentive to employers to publicize vacancies it also benefits those who have been unemployed for shorter periods and thus has both

preventive and curative functions;

b. greater emphasis on the interviews conducted at Employment Offices with those registering as unemployed for the first time. Instead of being simply an occasion for the transmission of information on benefit entitlements etc. these interviews are to be concerned much more closely with job-finding activities;

c. educational and vocational guidance, which is to be more market-orientated, i.e. it will take greater account of current developments on the labour market.

Curative policy, aimed at increasing the likelihood of obtaining work, has four components.

a. Training, through the Training Framework Scheme, under which the cost of training is reimbursed where it either increases individuals' chances of obtaining work or helps reallocate workers and thus make jobs available for others. Training for the long-term unemployed is also provided through Elementary Vocationally Orientated Adult Education (PVBE) projects and the Adult Training Centres (CVV) and Adult Administrative Training Centres (CAVV). Given the frequently wide gap between the knowledge and skills possessed by the long-term jobless and employers' current needs, training often takes the form of access or bridging courses (Meerjarenkader 1989-92, 1988). A new element here is the appointment of 100 training supervisors, attached to Local Employment Offices, with the job of maximizing the benefit accruing from the Training Framework Scheme (Additioneel pakket, 1988):

by providing individual support they help reduce training drop-out rates and ensure that participants complete their courses on time.

b. Access and bridging courses. In addition to the training provision already mentioned the Employment Offices also have at their disposal Vocational Guidance and Training Centres (CBBs), which provide general information and access courses for those seeking work.

c. Fresh Start Interviews This is a new, large-scale programme aimed at enabling the long-term unemployed to obtain jobs through personal contacts and guidance. To this end cooperative structures are to be established involving Local Employment Offices and Mu ipal Social Welfare Departments (see Chapter 5).

d. Job clubs These experimental clubs are intended to help the long-term unemployed return to work through their own endeavours.

The Employment Offices have no data on the extent of educational and vocational guidance provided for preventive purposes, though it is probably very small. Guidance activities of a curative nature for the long-term unemployed are concentrated on the programme of Fresh Start Interviews which got underway officially on 1 April 1989. The intention is that all the long-term unemployed will have taken part in personal interviews within three years (see Chapter 5).

3.3. Private guidance bureaus

The publicly-funded activities of the non-governmental

educational and vocational guidance bureaus are grouped under four headings, depending on the type of grants provided. Guidance for the long-term unemployed may be funded from contract grants (type 2) and project grants.

However, the service provided by guidance bureaus under contracts with Local Employment Offices is limited to those who have been out of work for less than three years. No national data are available on the scale and substance of such contracts, but the Ministry estimates that 50% of Employment Offices have contracts with one or more guidance bureaus and the indications are that the number in growing.

Project grants are provided in connection with innovative initiatives aimed either (a) at students following experimental courses in secondary education or (b), in the context of a manpower project, at persons seeking work (Rijkssubsidieregeling, 1986). Project bids in the latter category must be submitted in conjunction with a Local Employment Office. Manpower projects underway in 1988 included seven aimed at women entering or reentering employment, four at unemployed youngsters, four at the long-term unemployed, three at minorities and eight at miscellaneous groups (Projectvoorstellen, 1988). In 1987 five projects for the long-term unemployed received funding (Projectvoorstellen, 1987).

In addition to their publicly-funded activities guidance bureaus can also provide guidance on a fee-paying basis.

The organizing agencies may, for example, buy in guidance services from bureaus under the Fresh Start programme. An interim evaluation carried out in October 1988 found that 50% of Local Employment Offices had entered into agreements on this point, though among individuals for whom an action plan had been initiated in only 7% of cases did it include diagnostic procedures.

3.4. Regional Boards for the Apprenticeship System

Educational and vocational guidance for the long-term unemployed is a relatively minor part of the Regional Boards' work. Indeed, they have formed part of the Boards' target group only since 1986, and no additional provision has been made for work with them.

In some areas the Boards assist with guidance and admission activities for participants in Elementary Vocationally Orientated Adult Education (PBVE), sometimes in collaboration with an Area Education Centre (REC). The cost of such activities is borne by the PBVE Coordination Unit concerned, though payment is made only where individuals are actually admitted to training. The long-term unemployed make up a large part of the PBVE target group.

The Central Organization of Regional Boards for the Apprenticeship System (CORO) initiated two pilot projects in this connection in 1988, one aimed at the development of a guidance model and one at giving shape to collaboration between Regional Boards and Area Education

Centres (Projectvoorstel, 1988).

3.5. Women and Work Centres

Since the inception of the programme of Fresh Start Interviews the relevance of the Women and Work Centres' activities to the long-term unemployed has declined. No information is available on Centre activities aimed specifically at women who have been out of work, or off the labour market, for long periods.

3.6. Area Education Centres

No information is available at national level on Area Education Centre activities for the long-term unemployed.

3.7. Local initiatives

Alongside the measures taken and provision made at national level there are also various local initiatives aimed at helping the long-term unemployed to obtain work. The best known (considered in detail in Chapter 5) include:

a. the "Employment Honeycomb" project run by the Local Employment Office and the Municipal Social Welfare Department in the Hague,

b. the "Rotterdam Works" project run by the Local Employment Office and the Municipal Social Welfare Department in Rotterdam,

c. an employment project in North Helmond, jointly run by the Local Employment Office, the Municipal Social Welfare Department and North Helmond Community Development Unit.

All these projects are aimed wholly or partly at the long-term unemployed; they are local precursors of the national programme of Fresh Start Interviews.

There may well be other such projects; these are simply the best known.

4. POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

4.1. Introduction

Educational and vocational guidance in the Netherlands is in a state of flux, owing first to growing dissatisfaction with the fragmentation of guidance provision and second to changes in the statutory frameworks and bodies concerned wholly or in part with guidance. In this chapter we look at the various proposals for change and at their likely consequences for guidance services.

4.2. Employment services machinery

The greatest of the changes now pending concerns manpower services. Currently organized within the civil service, under draft legislation these are to be hived off and made the responsibility of a Central Employment Services Executive (CBA) whose board will include representatives of the two sides of industry and the government. Regional executives (RBAs) are also to be established, and these too will be tripartite in composition.

Under section 4(b) of the Employment Services Bill the new organization will be responsible for: "Information and advice services aimed at familiarizing employers and those seeking employment with the state of the labour market, *inter alia* through the provision of facilities for vocational guidance, the encouragement of activities by other bodies in this field and the promotion of policy coordination in the matter."

The Explanatory Memorandum accompanying the Bill notes

that "as vocational guidance has been incorporated into school and college courses and the voluntary organizations have reappraised their role in this field, the statutory function of the manpower services machinery has gradually shrunk. To the extent that it still had responsibility for public guidance services, there was decreasing necessity for these to be provided in-house. In the activities being carried out by the employment offices the stress has increasingly been on vocational guidance geared directly to the allocation of labour."

A recent commentary by the Vocational Guidance Council (Raad, 1988) makes the following point: "These passages clearly show that the role of the employment services machinery in vocational guidance is one of administrative responsibility rather than the actual implementation of activities. While policy responsibility is retained, there is considerable scope for buying in services from outside bodies."

It is also clear that educational and vocational guidance in the context of manpower services has a purely instrumental function: its purpose is to help the unemployed to obtain work and employers to fill vacancies. There is no mention of guidance activities outside this context, even though these account for 91% of the budget according to the Netherlands Association for Vocational Guidance (NVB) and the Association of Vocational Guidance Institutes (VBI) (Structuur, 1988).

These legislative proposals have been before the Lower House for some considerable time. Political debate has focused notably on the issue of the desirability of hiving off such an important policy area and thus depriving Parliament of its monitoring function. An early decision is not expected.

4.3. Adult education

New legislation is also proposed in respect of adult education, a bill to regulate planning, coordination and support having been introduced in July 1988. Support services are to be provided nationally and locally; for the purpose of local support services the provincial authorities are to designate operating areas, each of which will have its own Area Education Centre (see also 2.2.5.).

In various responses to this proposal it has been pointed out that while it would create new local agencies for adult education support, their role overlaps with that of existing organizations whose function includes adult vocational guidance. It appears likely that the section of the Ministry of Education and Science responsible for the proposal took insufficient account of the relationship of the Area Education Centres with other guidance agencies. The responses are to be incorporated in a further government paper which will stress improved coordination.

4.4. Vocational Education Bill

The Vocational Education Bill, placed before the Lower House in March 1988, includes provisions concerned with the planning, coordination and quality of part-time off-the-job training for both adults and youngsters in their late teens. The Bill covers the apprenticeship system, part-time intermediate vocational education (MBO) and specific training. Certain elements of such training are covered by manpower planning arrangements; the apprenticeship system remains outside them.

The new legislation, which is to replace among other things the Apprenticeships Act, redefines the function of the Regional Boards for the Apprenticeship System as follows: "The Regional Boards shall have the task, in collaboration with the national boards and Area Education Centres mentioned in section 31 of the Adult Education Framework Act, of promoting the apprenticeship system within their area, which may comprise a province or a part of a province. In particular the Regional Boards shall have responsibility for offering information and advice to potential participants."

The General Explanatory Memorandum accompanying the Bill refers to other agencies, at both national and local level, with tasks relating to guidance in the framework of vocational education and adult education: "With regard to the local or regional level, further deliberation is to take place when the results of a study on this subject are available. *(The reference is to the 1988 study by De*

Vries.) What is already clear is that Regional Boards will have to collaborate actively with other coordinators and providers in the implementation of guidance and recruitment functions."

4.5. Regionalizing vocational guidance

It is now four years since the Vocational Guidance Council drew attention to the complexity of guidance provision. In its report on the regionalization of institutionalized guidance activities the Council urged that the agencies in the voluntary sector organize themselves on a provincial basis (Raad, 1988), but thus far this increase in scale has yet to be achieved (De Vries, 1988).

The Council is not the only body to have stressed the need, at one time or another, for greater collaboration among the various agencies involved in guidance work. The national associations of guidance bureaus (NVB and VBI) and the Central Organization of Regional Boards for the Apprenticeship System (CORO) have both advocated new structures. The NVB and VBI favour the establishment of regional centres for educational and vocational guidance, operating independently of the employment services machinery (thus departing from the provisions of the proposed legislation on employment services), a position which has been endorsed by CORO.

Greater integration is also the government's aim. The Interdepartmental Steering Group on Educational and Vocational Guidance (ISBV), set up by the government in

1984, issued a report in 1987 emphasizing the desirability of mergers among the voluntary-sector bureaus, of collaboration between the bureaus, Regional Boards and careers staff in schools and colleges, and of an expanded role for the Contact Centres for Education and Employment (COAs).

In a recent annual report the Organization for Strategic Labour Market Research (OSA) drew attention to deficiencies in the regional infrastructure for vocational guidance and stressed the need for streamlining. The report also sounded a warning note regarding the growing tendency to gear vocational guidance to the needs of employers, pointing out the difficulty of making detailed and reliable forecasts of future requirements (OSA 1988).

The Advisory Council on Government Policy (WRR) has also urged the simplification of labour market instruments, stating in a 1987 report that "the core of the future battery of instruments should comprise one scheme covering training and one covering work-experience placements, supplemented with provision for educational and vocational guidance."

The second half of 1988 saw rapid developments in thinking on regionalization, as proposed legislation on employment services, adult education and vocational training compelled all concerned to determine and clarify their standpoints. The two national associations of voluntary-sector guidance bureaus (NVB and VBI) issued their

response, already mentioned, with proposals for future guidance arrangements; and consultations on forms of collaboration are underway between the associations and the Central Organization of Regional Boards for the Apprenticeship System (CORO) with a view to producing joint proposals in January 1989.

In November 1988 a mini-conference was held, at the NVB's instigation, involving politicians, policy-makers, employers, trade-unionists and representatives of the various guidance agencies. Those present agreed on the need for close coordination of guidance work at the regional level, with single centres being established in each area or region to bring together the guidance activities of the voluntary-sector bureaus, the Regional Boards for the Apprenticeship System, Local Employment Offices, Women and Work Centres and Area Education Centres.

The Vocational Guidance Council's report on the regional organization of educational and vocational guidance appeared at the end of November 1988. Having explored the issue at length, the report arrives at the following model:

"The principal conclusion was that we should work towards a single administrative organization in each area or region offering a comprehensive package of educational and vocational guidance services. The existing institutions, with their fragmented structure, should be absorbed into

Regional Vocational Guidance Centres (RBCs) covering geographical areas coinciding with those of the Regional Employment Services Executives (RBAs). This would reduce the number of points through which guidance is provided from 250 to around 80.

"All facilities within a region could in time be absorbed into the RBC, with the exception of the primary (general) functions of the employment services machinery.

"All legislative proposals relevant to educational and vocational guidance (such as those concerned with employment services, adult education and vocational training) should be considered from a unified perspective, and this could well lead to legislation concerned purely with educational and vocational guidance. The model we propose continues the line of development set in recent legislative proposals.

"The Regional Vocational Guidance Centres should be funded by the Central Employment Services Executive (CBA), thus enabling the Ministry of Education and Science to exercise its responsibilities and ensuring that the service has the broadest possible base."

Finally, the Interdepartmental Steering Group on Vocational Guidance (ISBV) is also in the process of preparing a report on this subject.

A central question in discussions of the best structure

for guidance work has been that of status and funding: should autonomous centres be established, funded under specific legislation, or should the service be attached to Regional Employment Services Executives and funded as such? This raises major issues of principle relating to the independence and accessibility of guidance services.

Employers' organizations and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment favour close links with manpower services machinery, believing that guidance services must be provided through the Regional Employment Services Executives (and funded accordingly) if they are to take proper account of labour market opportunities and firms' demand for staff.

The vocational-guidance bureaus, in contrast, point to the relative small proportion of guidance work that is directly related to the labour market and to the need for independent guidance.

The Vocational Guidance Council favours links with the Central Employment Services Executive (CBA), in view of its broad base: the Ministry of Education and Science is represented on the CBA but not on the Regional Executives, and it is for this reason that the Council rejects funding by the latter.

While there is general support for grouping guidance activities on a regional or area basis, there is no doubt that this will give rise to numerous problems in

administration, organization and implementation. Clearly, however, it will ensure a more coherent guidance service for the long-term unemployed, improving on the highly fragmented provision that currently exists.

5. PROJECTS FOR THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED

5.1. Introduction

This chapter considers four projects for the long-term unemployed of which vocational guidance forms part. In each case we look at the initiative, the objective and target group, methods, relations with other activities and results so far. This represents a selection of the most interesting projects from the viewpoint of scope and significance. They are considered in the order of their starting dates.

5.2. Helmond Employment Project

Since 1986, under its policy for areas facing multiple problems, the government has allocated additional resources to eighteen towns and cities with deprived districts to support integrated approaches to tackling those districts' problems. In the municipality of Helmond the entire sum has been used to establish an employment project in North Helmond, in the belief that improving the employment situation would help create the conditions in which other problems - empty property, drug use, prostitution - could also be tackled (Van den Berg and Van der Veer, 1987 and 1988).

In 1981 the North Helmond district had a population of over 13 000; since the mid-70s it had suffered increasingly from the problems of empty property, unemployment and crime. When the project began, in mid 1986, a quarter of the workforce was unemployed; of these a relatively large proportion comprised long-term

unemployed 17-30-year-olds with low levels of education and training.

For the purposes of the project collaboration was instituted between the Local Employment Office, the local authority and North Helmond Community Development Unit. At the preparatory stage an investigation was carried out into the needs of the young unemployed and the scope for placement with local employers. It was found that most of the youngsters were not so much work-shy as disillusioned; the lack of any prospect of a real job was a major disincentive to undertake training.

Three groups of unemployed people were distinguished:

1. Those who could be found employment, through the provision of wage subsidies, with relatively little assistance: the main cause of unemployment in this group is a lack of work experience and/or appropriate training, and its members are not so much hard-to-place as inadequately served by existing placement procedures.
2. Those who need intensive counselling and assistance (even after they have obtained work) and who have little or no prospect of employment without such support: members of this group have generally been unemployed longer than those in the first group (two years or more), lack work experience and are in some way socially isolated. Their self-confidence has often been eroded by the absence of the social status and contacts and sense of identity and organization which are provided by paid work.

The Local Employment Office generally regards this group as very hard-to-place.

3. Those whom the Local Employment Office regards as being, in their present circumstances, impossible to place in a permanent job: many members of this group have some form of police record; their lives are unstructured; their family situation is problematic; and they have rarely if even been in employment.

The target group as a whole comprised 191 youngsters (as at 11 November 1986), of whom around 20% belonged to the first group, 60% to the second and 20% to the third (Van den Berg and Van der Veer, 1988). Around 80% could be classed as long-term unemployed.

Placement through the regular channel, the Local Employment Office, is very difficult for members of the target group given the stigma attaching to their situation. Many job vacancies (around 40%) in the area are not notified to the Local Employment Office, and it was on these that the employment project focused. Only 30% of vacancies are filled with the Office's help, and these successful placements are virtually all of youngsters not belonging to the three categories defined above.

For the project a variable wage-subsidy scheme was designed with a view, among other things, to meeting the cost of the additional induction and supervision necessitated by participants' history of unemployment.

Community development workers familiar with the area undertook intensive placement activities involving counselling, supervision, training and close cooperation with industry.

The local placement workers contact members of the target group in person or by telephone, and initial interviews, based on questionnaires, take place in the home or at community centres. Where social or medical problems are identified individuals can be referred to a social worker, the counselling service for alcohol and drug abusers (CAD) or a non-residential mental care institution (RIAGG); employment options are then explored in consultation with the agency concerned. By operating at this local level it is hoped to minimize barriers to access and thus facilitate participation by the target group, and the many day-to-day visits and telephone calls testify to the effectiveness of this approach. No sanctions are applied.

Contacts with employers are made by the local placement workers, either directly or through the Local Employment Office, and involve personal visits to employers and the workplace. Where an opening is found a job interview is held in the presence of the local placement worker, and if placement proves possible agreements are reached on supervision, training and, where appropriate, wage subsidies. The advantage of this procedure from the employers' viewpoint is that they are relieved of part of the task of selection and supervision.

Young people in the first category can generally be placed in employment, if necessary with the help of a wage subsidy. However, a condition for successful placement is the preparation and implementation of individualized support programmes, including job-application skills and supplementary training as necessary.

Young people in the second category also need personal support programmes comprising not only individualized assistance but also experience of work (and the discipline of work) and some familiarization with a range of occupations.

Young people in the third category need a very intensive form of training, involving work experience, discipline and organization, taking account of the subculture in which they live. Successful placement is possible only on the basis of such training, and the process must be closely supervised by the local placement worker and the firm concerned. Combined employment and training projects, involving improvements to the local environment and facilities, are of particular importance for youngsters in this category. In designing such projects account is taken of local residents' needs and wishes regarding the maintenance and improvement of local facilities.

The training projects seek to meet local employers' needs: the training provided is of a practical nature and is geared to specific job requirements.

By the half-way mark around half of the target group of 191 youngsters had found permanent paid employment. A little over a third of them belonged to ethnic minorities. The project can thus be considered successful, though it has not reached sufficient of the women in the target group (Van de Berg and Van der Veer, 1988).

The North Helmond employment project is marked by an intensive, individual approach, involving visits (if desired) to participants' homes and careful guidance and supervision throughout the process, from initial contacts through job application to the initial period in employment. The local placement workers' familiarity with local conditions played a vital part in this.

5.3. Werkraat - The Hague

The Werkraat project, initiated on 1 February 1987 and based on collaboration between the Local Employment Office and Municipal Social Welfare Department in The Hague, seeks to contact long-term unemployed people in the 21-45 age group on a personal basis, to invite them for interview and to investigate the scope for job placement, either directly or through intermediate stages.

This project was one of the precursors of the programme of Fresh Start Interviews which began a little over a year later. The design of the two is broadly similar, except that job placement (and the encouragement of employers to take on the long-term unemployed) is an explicit feature of Werkraat, while in the case of Fresh Start this stage

of the process is undertaken by the mainstream agencies (see 5.5).

Fourteen placement workers were appointed with the job of carrying out interviews with 15 000 unemployed people; a standard format was designed for this purpose.

Between 1 February 1987 and 1 February 1988 a total of 5 495 long-term unemployed people on the Local Employment Office register were contacted; of these 30.6% were found to be improperly registered as seeking work. Of the remaining 3 777, 2 451 (65%) responded to the Werkraat invitation and 1 326 (35%) failed to do so. Of those who did respond, some proved at the first interview to be unavailable for work or dropped out at a later stage; this "soft response" group comprised 655 people, of 17.3% of the emended register.

- Members of the target group are contacted by letter; participation is on a voluntary basis. Following the initial interview participants may be placed directly in employment or offered some form of training or other preparation.

A survey of those who failed to respond to the Werkraat invitation (Vos and Langeveld, 1988) found that non-response was commonest in the 25-29 age group and that the proportion of those not of Dutch nationality was relatively high. Almost two thirds had completed only elementary education and had dropped out of secondary

school; among respondents the proportion in this category was around half (cf. Vos, 1988).

A major reason for not actively seeking work (and thus non-response to the Werkraat invitation) was found to be satisfaction with the jobless state: individuals spent their time on hobbies and in activities with family and friends. Municipal Social Welfare files show that many in this group engage in anti-social activity such as drug-abuse, crime, benefit fraud etc.

Also important were health reasons of a subjective (i.e. not officially recognized) nature, mainly psychological; a third reason found was the need to look after children.

Finally, one section of the non-response group also proved impossible to contact in the follow-up study: according to Municipal Social Welfare data these were people on the margins of society such as the homeless and tramps.

All in all, members of the non-response group had largely accepted and rationalized their unemployed state. At a cautious estimate, around a third of the "soft response" group and all of the non-response group must be regarded as unable to obtain work through their own efforts at a time of labour surplus.

The main requirement for the project's success is practical action in the form of job offers: "treatment plans" consisting only of vague assurances merely put off

the long-term unemployed. Few vacancies are available which are suitable for the long-term unemployed. At the start of the project 176 firms had notified 303 vacancies to Werkraat, of which 50 were later withdrawn, while Werkraat had no candidates for 22 of the vacancies.

Contacts with employers showed that industry recognizes a moral duty to help counter long-term unemployment, but the individuals concerned must be suitable for the jobs available. Employers are prepared to make some allowances with regard to work rates, provided individuals' motivation is clear. Wage subsidies have little or no effect. Few suitable vacancies could be found within the municipal authority itself. The collective agreement for the insurance industry includes a provision requiring firms to include long-term unemployed people among those they take on, and this has had a beneficial impact on job availability for the target group.

For these reasons it was decided in mid-1987 to focus greater attention on pre-placement schemes involving training and work experience. There is a clear need for municipal instruments for the organization of such schemes, e.g. through job pools, in order to provide support for those whose employment prospects are particularly poor.

Werkraat considers that no sanctions should be applied to individuals who fail to respond to invitations to attend

Fresh Start Interviews unless real job offers can be made (even to the least employable) and such offers are turned down without good reason. The high non-response rate can be improved by amending Employment Office registration requirement and by expanding placement options through municipal job pools.

5.4. The "Rotterdam at Work" project

Based on experiences of earlier placement activities a new forum was established on 18 December 1987 for collaboration between the Municipal Authority and the Local Employment Office in Rotterdam. The following description of the forum - Samenwerkingsverband Rotterdam Werkt, SRW - is taken from a report on a study of the long-term unemployed (Ter Huurne, 1988, pp. 30ff.).

The reasons for establishing SRW were fourfold:

- through its Social Welfare Department the Municipal Authority was having to deal with large numbers of long-term unemployed people who had little or no prospect of obtaining work;
- many of those registered at the Local Employment Office as seeking work were so ill-trained or had so little work experience as to be difficult or impossible to place;
- individuals applying for jobs were regularly being told that their lack of training and work experience made them unsuited to such vacancies as were available;
- in response to this situation a patchwork of facilities had been established at the initiative of the Municipal

Authority and the Local Employment Office. SRW was established to promote, coordinate, maintain and monitor a process of upgrading the knowledge, skills and motivation of the long-term unemployed, thereby ensuring that they have a real prospect of obtaining paid work. The aim is to create, partly by coordinating existing schemes, a coherent pattern of training, work experience and placement facilities within which individual upgrading programmes can be compiled for each unemployed person. Essential elements are the orientation towards mainstream paid employment, the individualized approach, participation on a voluntary basis and the prospect of at least a temporary paid job. SRW only organizes activities relevant to employment: it is not concerned with leisure activities, however worthwhile.

The target group comprises those who have been registered at the Local Employment Office as seeking unemployment for at least a year, together with those now returning to the labour market who have had no experience of paid work for at least a year. The initial priority group is made up of people aged under 40 who have been out of work for at least two years and whose education did not go beyond lower secondary level.

Members of the target group can be divided into three broad categories depending their on employment prospects. The report on collaboration between the Municipal Authority and the Local Employment Office in tackling long-term unemployment defines these categories as

follows:

a. those who, while almost certainly employable, fail to obtain work because they do not properly appreciate their own capacities or lack job-application skills. SRW can offer such people training in job-acquisition skills, provide job information and, if necessary, refer them to appropriate training agencies;
b. those whose lack of training or work experience means that they currently have little prospect of employment but who, with appropriate training and experience, would be able to obtain work. It is at such people that the SRW upgrading programme is aimed;
c. those who for whatever reason (such as age and lack of skills) have no real prospect of obtaining a "real" job. In such cases SRW has the job of investigating the scope for placement in some form of job-creation programme, perhaps with retention of social-welfare benefit.

It is recognized that members of all three categories often feel little or no motivation to return to paid employment. The main focus of activity is on those in the second category, whose unemployment is explicitly attributed to poor motivation coupled with a lack of training and/or work experience.

The upgrading process is divided into five phases:

1. recruitment, motivation and information;
2. general guidance and choice of occupational field;
3. determination of a training programme, followed by

training or work experience;
4. placement in paid work;
5. short-term post-placement support.

This division should be seen as a general framework which individuals may enter after phase 1 or leave before phase 5, depending on their circumstances.

SRW clients arrive by three routes:
1. they may make a direct approach, following contact with Local Employment Office information centres;
2. they may be referred by
   - the Municipal Social Welfare Department, notably the section dealing with unemployed people aged under 30 and, more generally, under the procedures laid down in the legislation on long-term unemployment benefit,
   - other intermediaries, such as community centres, youth centres and women's organizations;
3. they may be actively recruited by SRW recruitment and information staff.

Following the initial contact standardized forms serve as a basis for determining, with participants, what their capabilities and aspirations are with a view to selecting appropriate phase 3 activities. Great importance is attached to the general guidance phase, which may take two forms. In the shorter form an interview is conducted by a member of the Employment Office guidance staff covering the participant's employment options and prospects;

aptitude tests may be used. The longer version of the guidance phase comprises a course lasting up to three weeks, using audio-visual media and involving visits to firms and other organizations; this course, which is still at the experimental stage, is provided in conjunction with the Centre for Occupational Guidance and Training (CBB).

Following the guidance phase the induction process culminates in a final interview which seeks to determine:

- the occupational fields in which the participant is interested and in which he or she has a real prospect of finding employment,
- whether the participant needs additional training or work experience before seeking work,
- if such additional training or work experience is required, whether it can best be provided by SRW or in some other way.

The guidance and information officer then compiles a standard final report which the participant retains for the next phase.

A number of possibilities are then open, involving a variety of training, work experience and job-search activities.

The SRW upgrading programme itself includes three options, namely work and training placements, practical experience placements and work experience placements.

Work and training placements (ALP) allow the acquisition of work experience, with retention of social benefits, in combination with training. At the beginning of 1988 such placements had been created only within the municipal authority and were mainly of a clerical nature; the expansion of such placements within the municipal authority and other public-sector bodies is being given priority in 1988. Participants receive limited reimbursement of expenses, and the placements are subject to monitoring under the Unpaid Employment of Benefit Recipients Act.

Practical experience placements (PEP) are basically paid jobs, generally serving to complete an upgrading programme, and are provided in the framework of the government's policy for areas facing multiple problems. Placements normally last eight months, with the option of an extension for a further four where there is a real prospect of mainstream employment at the end of that time. The target group is limited to the under-30s. All the placements form part of a job pool, of which there are currently two (in the areas of municipal public works and the care of the elderly); plans exist for more municipal job pools of a more general nature. Wherever possible participants work under collectively agreed conditions of employment, though a training and discipline component would appear to be essential. What is on offer is not permanent employment but work experience aimed at progression to mainstream employment. Should the Youth Employment Guarantee Plan come into operation it will be

implemented through these placements.

A somewhat similar plan - the Rotterdam Strategic Labour Reserve (ROSTAR) - is aimed at offering work experience albeit on an irregular basis. The intention is that ROSTAR should operate as a temporary employment agency for unskilled workers with little or no work experience, who are not of interest to commercial agencies. Hours worked will be paid by the employer on the collectively agreed terms.

The third option within the SRW upgrading programme, namely work experience placements as part of of a training course, is still at the preparatory stage. The courses themselves are to be provided by the Centre for Elementary Vocationally Orientated Adult Education (PBVE), the Centre for Occupational Guidance and Training (CBB), the Adult Training Centres (CVV) and Adult Administrative Training Centres (CAVV).

All three options within the upgrading programme thus combine training and work experience.

In the case of the work and training placements (ALP) scheme, the objective at the end of 1988 was to offer 1200 places, 600 in the clerical field, 300 in the caring field and 300 in the technical field; around 500 mainly young people were placed at the beginning of 1988.

Within the practical experience placements (PEP) it is

hoped to retain the 75 places in the municipal public works pool and 100 in the care-of-the-elderly pool (again predominantly young people). The planned general municipal pool is intended to provide 150 places, divided equally between the clerical, caring and technical fields. It is hoped also to establish a pool of several hundred further places in industry, particularly in medium and small firms. Training and employment pools have existed for some years in the metal and construction industries.

There are also various options outside the SRW upgrading programme itself, some of them primarily concerned with enhancing participants' confidence and motivation. These include the Outward Bound City School, adult basic education, alternative employment projects (of which there are around 100 in Rotterdam), Women and Employment Centres and voluntary work. Procedures are being developed to ensure that all possible means are used to ensure that participants completing SRW schemes are able to obtain employment.

The target for 1988 is 5000 contacts, with 1000 people being helped to find mainstream paid employment; of these it is expected that half will obtain employment for themselves following their work experience placement, while the other half will be placed by the Local Employment Office. On the basis of earlier experience it is expected that in 1988 1500 people (30% of the 5000) will complete phases 1 and 2 and enter phase 3, and of these 1000 people (two thirds of the 1500) will obtain

work in phase 4.

SRW can be seen as a new umbrella body bringing together various established activities and agencies (eight of the latter), with a new and explicit emphasis on activities relevant to the needs of the labour market. SRW organizes and coordinates activities rather than carrying them out itself, referring participants to appropriate agencies. While organizationally SRW comes under the director of the Local Employment Office, its 45 staff are seconded from the Municipal Social Welfare Department.

5.5. Fresh Start ("reorientation") interviews
For this section use has been made of a recent progress report by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (17 November 1988).

Having for some years recognized that existing manpower services schemes were inadequate to the task of giving the long-term unemployed a real chance of finding work, the Ministry decided in the summer of 1987, following recommendations from the Working Group on Long-Term Unemployment of the Joint Industrial Labour Council, to initiate the national programme of Fresh Start Interviews. Based on an intensive individual approach, this programme seeks to promote the employment or reemployment of those who have been without work for long periods.

For each participant an action plan is drawn up, taking account of individual wishes and aptitudes and labour

market opportunities. Such plans generally comprise several steps, depending on circumstances. They may, for example, include a medical report, vocational aptitude testing, initial work experience within the municipal authority, a training placement, a work experience placement, training in job-application skills and job-finding measures; in some cases, however, the individual plan may simply include job-finding measures. The scope of each plan will depend on how easily the individual can be placed in employment. Even with all the various measures it may sometimes be the case that there is no real prospect of finding employment.

Initially it was decided to carry out Fresh Start Interviews with those who had been out of work for three years or longer, given the particular problems they face. In addition to those registered at Local Employment Offices as seeking employment, the target group also included people (mainly women) who could show that they had been trying to reenter the labour market for at least three years. It is planned to contact all members of this group within three years. Allowing for inaccuracies in the registers (not all those registered as seeking employment are in fact doing so), this implies contacting 45 000 people and compiling the same number of action plans every year. An extra 250 full-time members of staff have been taken on for this purpose, each of whom will thus have the job of compiling 180 plans every year.

Since municipalities (through their Social Welfare

Departments) and Local Employment Offices share responsibility for the long-term unemployed it was decided to adopt a joint approach, so that the two sides' efforts and expertise could be combined or used to reinforce one another. Collaboration is therefore built into the organizational arrangements: without a collaborative consortium no additional manpower or financial resources are made available. The job of the Fresh Start staff is simply to compile and initiate the individual action plans; responsibility for implementing the various steps making up the plans rests with Employment Offices and Social Welfare Departments.

By the time the progress report was compiled the 64 Local Employment Offices had reached 370 agreements on consortium arrangements with municipal authorities; only in the case of a few small municipalities with low rates of unemployment had no agreements been reached, while discussions were still underway with 26.

One of the agreements has a third co-signatory, namely a trade union, while five provide for other parties in the consortium steering groups (in two cases employers' and trade union representatives, in one an employers' organization, in one a work experience project and in one the Social Security Advisory Service).

The consortia are normally located within Employment Offices, though in a few cases they have premises of their own; in no cases are they located within Social Welfare

Departments. There is also some variation in the location of initial interviews: while they are usually held on the premises where the consortium is quartered, if this is an Employment Office preference may be given to interviewing participants at a Social Welfare Department. In some cases this is the norm, but in others the location of interviews depends on where participants live: if the consortium itself is located in another municipality they are held at the participant's local Social Welfare Department. In this way it is hoped to facilitate access to the scheme. The desire to minimize barriers to access is also evident from the willingness shown in some cases to visit interviewees in their homes or to carry out interviews e.g. in rooms in local libraries.

On the official launch date of 1 April 1988 only 30% of consortia had begun holding interviews, but by 1 October 1988 the figure had risen to 100%. A total of 41.5 million guilders has been set aside for Fresh Start in 1988.

Five of the consortia aim at a wider target group than the official definition, extending it to include people who have been unemployed for only one or two years. The majority, however, aim at a more limited group, with an initial selection carried out by Municipal Social Welfare Departments (in seven cases) or Local Employment Offices (in the remainder); the target group may be limited to certain age groups (58%), to those whose employment prospects are relatively good (15%) or to those registered

with an Employment Office (11%). Just over 25% of the consortia do not further restrict the official target group. Where age limits are applied, consortia may point to the poor job prospects of older people among the long-term unemployed and to the lack of suitable training facilities; conversely, some point to the alternative opportunities open to younger people.

Such limitations are generally intended to be temporary, the intention being to develop expertise before tackling the more difficult cases.

All the schemes allow direct contacts by the unemployed themselves, as well as referrals by other agencies and requests from other agencies that particular individuals be contacted. In selecting individuals for invitation use is made of the files of both Employment Offices and Social Welfare Departments, often in combination. The official target of 180 individual action plans per year for each Fresh Start staff member is sometimes varied, either upwards or downwards; in some cases workloads are increased by giving the same members of staff responsibility for placement activities (12%).

Members of the target group are generally invited to attend for interview by letter, sometimes accompanied by a standard leaflet, though in a few cases contact is made by telephone. Where invitees fail to respond a second, and sometimes a third, letter is sent; the severest sanction in cases of non-response (imposed by one third of the

consortia) is deletion from the Employment Office register, while in 42% of cases the Social Welfare Department is notified. No decision has yet been taken on sanctions by 12% of the consortia, and in 7% of cases no sanctions are applied.

Thirteen percent of consortia have special links with employers with a view to placing the long-term unemployed; links are also maintained with training agencies (53%), work experience projects (13%), sheltered employment workshops (6%), vocational guidance bureaus (3%) and other support agencies (13%).

When the progress report was compiled 17 000 people had been summoned for interview, of whom 29% were over 35, 32% were women, 16% were of non-Dutch nationality and 44% had not completed secondary education (Additioneel, 1988).

Of the invitees 7% failed to appear even after several contacts; in part this was due to obsolete data (e.g. individuals had already found work or had moved house). In general two interviews were needed, averaging an hour in length each, before an action plan could be compiled. A total of 31 208 interviews were carried out, leading to just over 15 000 assessments. The position is summarized in the table below.

Fresh Start Interviews to November 1988 - A Summary

1.	Invitees	17 308	100%		
2.	'No response	1 221	7%		
3.	Interviews	31 208	-		
4.	Assessments	15 090	87%	100%	
5.	No plan of action necessary (job already found)	1 403		9%	
6.	No plan of action possible	3 037		20%	
	- interviewee unwilling	595		4%	
	- social and medical grounds	1 359		9%	
	- other grounds	1 083		7%	
7.	Plan of action compiled	10 650		71%	
8.	Plan of action initiated	7 234		48%	100%
	- training/course	2 370			44%
	- work experience	303			4%
	- training in job application skills	544			8%
	- vocational guidance	537			7%
	- "taster" placement	156			2%
	- other	3 234			45%
9.	Number placed in jobs	1 309		9%	100%
	- with support measures	842			64%
	- without support measures	467			36%
10.	Notifications following non-response or non-cooperation	385		3%	

Source: calculated on the basis of a summary in: Additioneel, 1988.

The progress made with the Fresh Start programme shows that the goal of covering all the long-term unemployed within three years (with the exception of those who fail to appear) is attainable. While specific vocational guidance is rarely offered, the interviews themselves are such that they can be regarded as a form of job-orientated guidance.

6. COMPARING THE PROJECTS

6.1. Introduction

The four projects considered have much in common: all include elements of educational and vocational guidance in an integrated programme which begins by contacting the long-term unemployed and ends by finding them stable jobs or recognizing their unsuitability for employment. In terms of phasing and detail, however, there are variations between the projects.

The three local projects in Helmond, The Hague and Rotterdam can be seen as precursors of the national Fresh Start programme, and it is interesting to note how they have incorporated the design and resources of the later programme.

This chapter compares and contrasts the projects in a number of respects.

6.2. Participating organizations

We begin with the participating organizations. All the projects involve Local Employment Offices and municipal authorities, generally in the shape of their Social Welfare Departments, with collaborative agreements being reached between the two.

The Helmond project includes a third partner, the Community Development Unit, and it is probably for this reason that the project adopts a more intensive and individualized approach (involving e.g. more contacts in

person and on the telephone than by letter) than do the others.

6.3. Objective

In each case the goal is the same, namely to promote the employment or reemployment of those who have been out of work for a long time.

In fact there has been something of a shift in policy towards the long-term unemployed, particularly within the employment services organization. The work required in connection with the placement of members of the target group was long seen as out of proportion to the results that could be achieved, and Local Employment Offices therefore opted to target their scarce resources where they were most likely to produce results. The shortage of suitable employment was considered grounds for not focusing placement efforts on the hard-to-place, who thus had to rely on local-authority social welfare services.

More recently it has been recognized that such a policy condemns large numbers of people to lifelong unemployment, and that it may even be preferable to "share" unemployment more widely. It has also been shown that local projects such as that implemented in Helmond (where an intensive approach, tailored to specific individual needs, is coupled with e.g. wage subsidies and reinforced by the general economic recovery) could help some of the long-term unemployed back into work. This led to a broadening of manpower-policy objectives to include the placement of

the long-term unemployed, as national policies followed examples set at the local level.

6.4. Target groups

There is some variation in the definition of target groups. The Werkraat project, the SRW scheme and Fresh Start focus on all those who have been out of work for at least three years in, respectively, The Hague, Rotterdam and the country at large. It is intended to reach the whole of the target group within a three-year period, albeit it is not clear what is to happen during and after that period to those entering the target group in the meantime. There is also some variation in age groups.

The Helmond project focuses on unemployed young people in the district of North Helmond, of whom around 80% have been out of work for three years or more.

Depending on how easy individuals are to place in employment a three-way distinction is made within the target groups:

- those who can be placed immediately,
- those who are likely to find employment following a pre-placement programme which includes such elements as vocational aptitude tests, training and work experience,
- those who are unlikely to be employable even after such a period of preparation, whether on social and medical grounds or because they are unwilling to work.

In Helmond the ratio between these groups was found to be 20:60:20, while the Fresh Start programme indicated a

ratio of 18:71:20.

6.5. Methods

The projects vary significantly in their procedures. To describe this variation we distinguish a number of steps that experience shows are required if the long-term unemployed are to be returned to work (cf. Ter Huurne, 1988). Together these steps constitute the pre-placement process whereby individuals' knowledge, skills and motivation are upgraded in preparation for work. It should be remembered that there are local variations within the Fresh Start programme.

1. Recruitment, motivation, information

Contact is made with the long-term unemployed in different ways: the most thoroughgoing approach is used in Helmond, where two workers familiar with the local area telephone or visit members of the target group; in the case of the Werkraat project in The Hague potential participants are contacted by letter; in that of SRW in Rotterdam and the national Fresh Start programme the approaches used fall between these extremes.

While the Helmond project may claim to be uniquely accessible thanks to the involvement of the Community Development Unit, the SRW project and some local manifestations of Fresh Start also have minimal barriers to access.

Under the more formal approaches individuals may be sent

one or two reminders, after which attempts at recruitment cease. The descriptions of the other projects make no mention of such reiteration, and indeed in the Helmond project it is assumed that all members of the target group can be identified and contacted. All the projects allow both direct approaches by members of the public and referrals from other agencies and projects.

2. Interviews and action plans

The interviews which serve as the starting point for "tailor-made" individual programmes are based in every case on standard formats.

The details of individual action or treatment plans in fact broadly comprise a series of "off the peg" options. In the case of the Helmond project individuals may be referred to a social or medical aid centre, and the details of their plan will then be compiled in conjunction with that centre; in the other cases individuals are not referred until their plan has been compiled, though they may return to the procedure thereafter. At that stage the decision may be taken (a) to undertake further placement activities, (b) to arrange pre-placement training or work experience, or (c) to terminate the procedure on the grounds that the individual is unwilling to take employment or is socially or medically unfit. The Helmond project excludes the third of these options: all participants are assumed to be employable, if not in permanent mainstream work then at least in some form of job-creation scheme.

3. Vocational testing and guidance

One of the steps in the pre-placement programmes for which all the projects provide is thorough specialist vocational testing and guidance. This task is often performed by non-governmental vocational guidance bureaus.

4. Training

All the projects provide for referral to some form of training geared to placement in work. Sometimes (as in Helmond) training schemes are specially organized in the context of the project, but more generally use is made of existing provision. In all cases there is much stress on training in job-application skills.

Some training programmes include periods of on-the-job training in industry.

5. Work experience schemes

All the projects allow for participation in work experience schemes, which may be aimed either at providing specific experience with an element of training or more generally at helping individuals learn to deal with the work situation, to structure their time, and so on; the first type seeks to upgrade participants' knowledge and skills, while the second is more concerned with their motivation. Work experience schemes, particularly of the second type, may be specially organized within the project; in other cases use is made of existing schemes.

6. Job-placement activities

An important difference between the national Fresh Start programme and the three local initiatives is that in the former placement activities generally remain the responsibility of the Local Employment Office, while in the latter they are an integral part of the project (though 21% of local Fresh Start agreements do in fact provide for placement services). The three local projects are also actively involved in finding or creating work for participants (e.g. through job pools), and in Helmond and The Hague securing sufficient employment is seen as a condition for the project's success; reference is made in this connection to the benefits of specific provisions in collective agreements. This element is absent from the Fresh Start initiative, though in a few cases contacts are maintained with industry; a criticism of this approach is that it involves inviting the long-term unemployed to attend interviews without ensuring that any concrete job offer can be made.

7. Follow-up

Fresh Start makes no provision for follow-up, i.e. for any kind of support once participants have been placed in employment; the SRW project makes reference to such activities, but the details have yet to be worked out. In contrast, follow-up is very much a feature of the Helmond project, where post-placement support is provided by the local placement worker following discussion with the employer.

8. Sanctions

Much debate has surrounded the issue of the extent and nature of any sanctions in respect of non-attendance at interview or failure to take up job offers. The local projects operate on an explicitly voluntary basis, while under Fresh Start the national policy is to apply sanctions of the type imposed for "improper conduct" in respect of social-welfare benefits. However, the policy is applied with varying degrees of stringency by municipalities' Social Welfare Departments.

6.6. Results

The question of the extent to which different procedures are associated with different results cannot unfortunately be answered, since the results obtained are not strictly comparable. First, the target groups differ somewhat: Fresh Start, for example, has given priority to those who are likely to be relatively easy to place, with a view to building up experience, while the Helmond project focuses on the young unemployed. The varying extent to which members of the target groups come forward spontaneously also has an impact.

Given the complexity of comparison, it is not possible in this context to collect or compile exact data on the matter; further research is needed.

A side-effect of all the projects has been the emendation of Local Employment Office and Social Welfare Department records as those incorrectly registered as seeking work

are removed. This has produced a fall in registered long-term unemployment (though not of course in the real rate).

6.7. Key differences

The selected projects all feature an integrated approach to the employment or reemployment of the long-term unemployed, but there are nevertheless significant differences. These concern:

a. the intensity of the initial approach,
b. the sanctions imposed in cases of non-response or non-cooperation,
c. the support offered during and after the placement process,
d. the use of special employment-promoting measures,
e. the incentives offered to encourage employers to take on the long-term unemployed,
f. the creation within the projects of temporary jobs or work experience places.

Under all these headings it is Fresh Start (in some of its manifestations) that is least ambitious, while the most comprehensive approach is taken by the Helmond project. However, the differences between the three local projects (and some forms of Fresh Start) are not great.

The educational and vocational guidance provided in the context of the various projects has three distinguishing features: first, it is explicitly geared to job-finding (and not e.g. to self-development); second, it is never

seen in isolation but always as part of a comprehensive approach to the problem of long-term unemployment; and third, it divides into information and support activities (in the form of interviews) geared to compiling individual plans of action on the one hand and, on the other, more specialized testing and counselling for the minority of participants who have not yet chosen an occupational field. This last function is sometimes performed by outside bodies.

This last distinction may be compared with that made by the Vocational Guidance Council in its recent report on the organization of educational and vocational guidance in the 1990s, where the primary or general function is distinguished from the secondary or specialist function. In the Council's view the second function could be entrusted to outside bodies.

In taking this view the Council reflects the experience of the projects we have considered, which is that the work of contacting, helping and placing the long-term unemployed is best carried out in an integrated fashion, i.e. by one person. This would indicate that the proposal made by the umbrella organizations of private-sector guidance bureaus for a sharp distinction between guidance and job-placement is not realistic.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations set out below are subject to the reservation that the data needed to compare the various projects' effectiveness are not yet available.

1. Educational and vocational guidance for the long-term unemployed should be seen as an integrated process, starting with the first contact and not ending until the individual is in stable employment. This process comprises a number of upgrading activities, such as aptitude testing, training and work experience and may include job-placement services and post-placement support. The integrated nature of the process should be reflected in its being the responsibility of a single person, taking on a sort of parental function vis-a-vis the participant and ensuring that the process unfolds satisfactorily. The element of vocational guidance (as a primary function) must therefore be integrated with that of job-placement; such a procedure is already familiar to the advisors working for the Regional Boards for the Apprenticeship System, who combine the two functions in respect of youngsters completing lower-level secondary education.

2. It therefore follows that there must be close cooperation between the relevant organizations, through special collaborative units or consortia, for the purpose of helping the long-term unemployed back to work. Further study is needed of the advantages of including preparatory programmes among such units'

functions.

3. It is important to minimize barriers to access, e.g. through personal contacts, visits to participants in their homes, the use of local premises, links with other community services etc.

4. Concrete job offers should be made available, either by encouraging employers to take on long-term unemployed individuals (e.g. by including appropriate provisions in collective agreements and by offering wage subsidies) or by creating special projects involving job pools or work experience schemes. The indication from various projects is that members of the target group see little point in undertaking training simply to improve their employability, i.e. with no concrete prospect of a job; their previous experience of failure has often been painful and extensive.

5. Follow-up, i.e. post-placement support, should form part of the function of the agencies involved in preparation and placement work with the long-term unemployed. This encourages employers to take on people who have been out of work for a long time because it relieves them of part of the selection and induction process and thus constitutes a form of placement promotion. It also helps prevent people abandoning their newly found jobs.

6. Finally, <u>further comparison and evaluation</u> of the projects is needed, notably as regards their effectiveness. While each project is being evaluated, either internally or externally, on an individual basis, it is clear that a comparative study could produce valuable additional information.

SUMMARY

European studies of the problem of unemployment show that by 1987 over half of those without a job were long-term unemployed. It also emerges that there is little systematic provision for individual guidance with a view to determining individuals' aptitudes and referring them to appropriate training and employment. CEDEFOP has therefore decided to chart the situation in member states with regard to educational and vocational guidance for the long-term unemployed and to identify relevant projects suitable for emulation. This report describes the situation in the Netherlands.

The report consists of two parts. It begins by describing the institutional structure of educational and vocational guidance in the Netherlands, together with major policy developments in the field. It then outlines the position of educational and vocational guidance for the long-term unemployed, going on to give detailed descriptions of five selected projects and ending with comparisons and recommendations.

In the Netherlands there are five types of agency (in addition to careers staff in schools and colleges) whose function is, wholly or partly, the provision of educational and vocational guidance.

1. A "public" guidance service is provided by the 65 Local Employment Offices, which form part of the manpower

services machinery of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. Vocational guidance is only one of their functions and is geared to placing job-seekers in employment.

2. A "private" guidance service is offered by 25 educational and vocational guidance bureaus in the private (voluntary) sector, with a total of 67 offices. Guidance is their only function, and they provide independent information, testing, counselling and support services for clients in any category or age group.

3. In addition to their back-up and administrative functions the fifteen Regional Boards for the Apprenticeship System also offer vocational guidance; originally this service was aimed mainly at young people and focused on the apprenticeship system, but in the recent past it has been extended to adults and the full range of training and employment options.

4. The 40 Women and Work Centres provide information and guidance for women entering or reentering the labour market. The Centres collaborate closely with Employment Offices and are funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment.

5. Area Education Centres, recently established in almost all parts of the country, offer information and guidance on adult education.

All these agencies offer some degree of vocational guidance for the long-term unemployed. The most systematic and large-scale provision is the national Fresh Start programme, initiated in 1988, under which over a three-year period all the long-term unemployed throughout the country are to be invited to attend interviews; on the basis of these interviews individual action plans will be compiled, covering training and work experience, with the aim of placing participants in employment. Collaborative consortia have been established for this purpose, involving Local Employment Offices and Municipal Social Welfare Departments. Where in-depth vocational counselling or testing is required use is often made of private-sector guidance bureaus. Precursors of Fresh Start are to be found in a number of the larger municipalities in the form of local projects for the long-term unemployed.

The Regional Boards for the Apprenticeship System and the Area Education Centres have yet to offer adult vocational guidance on any scale. Forms of collaboration are under development.

Major changes are pending in the organization of educational and vocational guidance. A proposal is now under consideration to hive off the entire machinery of manpower services from the civil service and place it under tripartite control (involving employers, unions and government). Other proposals are aimed at countering the fragmentation of vocational guidance services: the

Vocational Guidance Council, for example, recently recommended the establishment of Regional Guidance Centres in which all in-depth forms of testing and counselling would be concentrated, taking over this function from the private-sector guidance bureaus, Regional Boards, Women and Work Centres, Area Education Centres and Employment Offices. Such Regional Centres would have a secondary or specialist function, as against the primary or general function of Employment Offices and careers staff in schools and colleges. Funding would be through the quasi-autonomous national machinery for manpower services.

This study looks in detail at four projects, namely the national Fresh Start programme and local projects in Helmond, The Hague and Rotterdam.

The three local projects and Fresh Start all apply an integrated approach involving:

1. recruitment, motivation and information,
2. a consideration of the options, the choice of an occupational field and the compilation of individual action plans,
3. vocational aptitude tests and counselling,
4. training,
5. work experience,
6. job-placement,
7. post-placement support.

Following the first two steps individuals may either proceed directly to the job-placement stage or take one or more of the intermediate steps in preparation for

placement.

The projects differ in some essential respects, namely:

a. the intensity of the initial approach, which may be by letter, by telephone or in person,
b. the sanctions imposed in cases of non-response or non-cooperation, which range from none at all to cuts in social benefit entitlements,
c. the support offered during and after the placement process,
d. the application of special employment-promoting measures,
e. the incentives offered to encourage employers to take on the long-term unemployed,
f. the creation within the projects of temporary jobs or work experience places.

Under all these headings it is Fresh Start (in some of its manifestations) that is least ambitious, while the most comprehensive approach is taken by the Helmond project. However, the differences between the three local projects (and some forms of Fresh Start) are not great.

The educational and vocational guidance provided in the context of the various projects has three distinguishing features: first, it is explicitly geared to job-finding; second, it is never seen in isolation but always as part of a comprehensive approach to the problem of long-term unemployment; and third, it divides into information and support activities (in the form of interviews) geared to

compiling individual plans of action and, where necessary, more specialized testing and counselling. This last function is sometimes performed by outside bodies.

It is noteworthy that as at present constituted educational and vocational guidance for the long-term unemployed is largely a function of the national manpower services machinery and municipal authorities; the involvement of the various regional bodies mentioned is only marginal.

The report includes a number of recommendations, subject to the reservation that for various reasons a comparison of the effectiveness of the various projects is not yet possible.

1. Educational and vocational guidance for the long-term unemployed should be seen as an integrated process, starting with the first contact and not ending until the individual is in stable employment (or it is recognized that he or she cannot be placed).

2. There must be close cooperation between the relevant organizations covering initial interviews, training, work experience, aptitude testing and job-placement; each participant should have to deal with only one guidance and placement officer throughout his or her individual programme.

3. Barriers to access must be minimized, through personal

contacts, visits to participants in their homes, the use of local premises, etc.

4. It should be possible to make concrete job offers at a very early stage as possible, if necessary by creating special projects involving job pools or work experience schemes.

5. Follow-up, in the form of post-placement support, should be part of each participant's programme.

A final recommendation is that further comparison and evaluation of the projects be made, notably as regards their effectiveness.

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Educational and vocational guidance for the long-term unemployed in the Netherlands

B. de Vries
ITS, Institute of Applied Social Sciences

CEDEFOP Document

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

1989 — 90 pp. — 21.0 × 29.7 cm

EN

ISBN 92-826-0784-4

Catalogue number: HX-56-89-805-EN-C

Price (excluding VAT) in Luxembourg: ECU 5

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Catalogue number: HX-56-89-805-EN-C

Price (excluding VAT) in Luxembourg: **ECU 5**

ISBN 92-826-0784-4

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